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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CVIS](#) [ASEC](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: ST. LUCIA: NEWLY APPOINTED FOREIGN MINISTER MAKES
A SURPRISE VISIT

REF: A. 06 BRIDGETOWN 2248

[1](#)B. 06 BRIDGETOWN 700

Classified By: DCM Mary Ellen T. Gilroy for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: St. Lucia's newly appointed Foreign Minister, Rufus Bousquet, visited the U.S. Embassy in Barbados on January 18 to discuss his visa ineligibility with the Consul General. FM Bousquet also paid a courtesy call on the DCM, who asked about APIS legislation for Cricket World Cup and requested assistance in setting appointments for the Ambassador to present credentials. Post continues to be concerned about FM Bousquet's suitability for his current post, given his lack of international relations background and youthful indiscretions which resulted in his arrest for illegally seeking a U.S. passport and an inquiry into his probable misuse of a United Nations grant. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) On January 18, St. Lucian Minister for External Affairs, International Financial Services, Information, and Broadcasting Rufus Bousquet became the first foreign government official to pay a courtesy call on U.S. officials in Bridgetown's new Embassy building. FM Bousquet traveled unannounced to Bridgetown to discuss a personal visa matter with the Consul General who invited him to pay a courtesy call on DCM Gilroy, as Ambassador Ourisman was presenting credentials in Grenada.

VISA CONCERNS: MEETING WITH THE CONSUL GENERAL

[1](#)3. (C) FM Bousquet's primary purpose for visiting the Embassy was to discuss his permanent ineligibility for a U.S. visa with Consul General Howard. The 48-year-old minister told the CG of his arrest when, as a college student in the United States, Bousquet tried to obtain a U.S. passport illegally. At the time, he cooperated with the authorities and, as a result, was under the impression this incident would no longer plague him. Bousquet seemed to be free of his past as he successfully applied for, obtained, and used a U.S. visa, traveling to and from the United States for a number of years. However, his previous arrest appeared on an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) watchlist in 1997 when he attempted travel to San Juan, Puerto Rico. Trying not to draw attention to his past, Bousquet chose to deny his previous arrest, upon which the INS officer found Bousquet permanently ineligible for a U.S. visa under INA section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) for misrepresentation. Since this incident, Bousquet has successfully applied for six waivers of his ineligibility and currently holds a valid B1/B2 visa

valid until 2010.

¶4. (C) FM Bousquet's chief concern was his arrest and visa history becoming public knowledge in St. Lucia by an indiscreet correspondence by the Embassy. CG Howard assured the Foreign Minister that all diplomatic visas are not subject to the misrepresentation ineligibility and that any waivers necessary for future visas would be handled quickly and discreetly.

¶5. (C) The CG also raised the USG's concerns about the deteriorating security environment in St. Lucia, informing FM Bousquet that in July 2006 the Embassy strengthened language about crime in the Consular Information Sheet on St. Lucia to warn Americans about increased violent crime against tourists (ref B). FM Bousquet asked for a list of the cases involving American citizens so that he could ensure that the police will make those cases a priority.

CRICKET AND CREDENTIALS: MEETING WITH THE DCM

¶6. (SBU) The CG then escorted his visitor to an impromptu meeting with DCM Gilroy. In a cordial but short courtesy call, Minister Bousquet and the DCM discussed a number of pertinent issues, the most important being preparations for the upcoming Cricket World Cup (CWC). After expressing the USG's understanding that the new St. Lucia government was still getting its bearings, the DCM stressed the urgency of passing enabling legislation for the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) essential to providing security checks on visitors entering the Eastern Caribbean's "single domestic space" from February 1 through May 15. In response, FM Bousquet explained that he had recently received APIS updates from Barbados Deputy Prime Minister Mottley and that the new Attorney General had also received draft APIS

legislation. The DCM emphasized that APIS is a legacy project that will assist in efficiently processing names of passengers well beyond the March-April 2007 CWC events. (Note: The Government of St. Lucia appointed Nicholas Frederick as Attorney General on January 16. Frederick was permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education before he began a career in law. The resident British High Commissioner in St. Lucia stated that, as with most of the new ministers, Frederick will have a steep learning curve. End Note.)

¶7. (SBU) In addition to discussing preparations for CWC, DCM Gilroy expressed the USG's congratulations on the victory of the United Workers Party in St. Lucia's December 11, 2006, parliamentary elections. She also shared her disappointment that St. Lucia's Protocol Office has been unable to arrange a meeting with Prime Minister Sir John Compton at which she could directly convey a congratulatory message. FM Bousquet explained that PM Compton has been greeting a number of dignitaries and that all the increased diplomatic attention has been overwhelming for the small country. The DCM also raised the difficulty Post has had arranging an appointment for Ambassador Ourisman to present her credentials to St. Lucia's Governor General prior to St. Lucia's national day on February 22. The DCM requested the Foreign Minister's assistance in setting an appointment for either January 29-30 or immediately before the national day on February 20-21, to which FM Bousquet stated he would try to help.

BIO INFORMATION: A BLUNDER WITH UN FUNDS?

¶8. (C) Bousquet's appointment as Foreign Minister puzzled most St. Lucia watchers who expressed confusion as to Bousquet's identity and qualifications for this position. (Note: The same reaction held true for Minister for Home Affairs and National Security Dr. Keith Mondesir. See ref A. End Note.) A newspaper article summarizing biographies of each candidate days before the 2006 election stated of Bousquet's professional experience: "Rufus has carved out business niches in the tourism and financial service sectors.

He and his wife quietly manage their own business affairs." When asked about these business niches, Victor Marquis, newspaper editor and former campaign manager for the United Workers Party (UWP), replied that Bousquet has never had a serious profession or business, but rather rode his father's and uncle's coattails into politics. Bousquet's father was a popular parliamentarian representing Choiseul, the district Bousquet now represents. When PM Compton announced Bousquet's appointment as Foreign Minister he noted Bousquet's role in introducing international financial services to St. Lucia when serving as minister responsible for the National Development Corporation in 1995.

¶9. (C) As routine election mudslinging, the St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) raised accusations that Bousquet previously misused a United Nations grant. In a private conversation with PolOff, Marquis, who served as UWP campaign manager for the 1992 elections, explained the details of the alleged abuse of UN funds. According to Marquis, Bousquet returned from living in California in 1989 and immediately decided to run for public office. In order to raise funds for his campaign, fellow UWP member Dr. Charles Flemming, who was serving at the time as St. Lucia's Ambassador to the UN and the chairman of the UN's funding committee, approved Bousquet's application for a six-month research grant. However, according to Marquis, Bousquet utilized the grant funds for his own purposes rather than accomplishing any of the terms of the grant. Some time later, when the UN opened an inquiry on the use of the funds, Bousquet created and submitted a report on his nonexistent project. His report apparently exonerated him of any further inquiry. No official accusations or charges were subsequently made against Bousquet.

COMMENT

¶10. (C) FM Bousquet displayed poise and a professional demeanor when meeting with the DCM, but also seemed somewhat quiet and introverted. Although the meeting was brief and only slightly substantive, the Foreign Minister spoke intelligently on the few issues discussed. However, Bousquet's apparent lack of qualifications and experience in diplomacy, as well as reports of the misuse of UN funds and misrepresentation of his immigration record, continue to cause

concern. Post will obtain additional biographical information on FM Bousquet and report on future interactions with the new St. Lucia government, such as Ambassador Ourisman's upcoming credentials presentation and attendance at St. Lucia's national day celebrations on February 22.

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